



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Burley Field Office
15 East 200 South
Burley, ID 83318
(208) 677-6600



In Reply Refer To:
3200 (IDT020) P
DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2014-0030-DNA
IDI-37087

Dear Interested Parties:

The Bureau of Land Management, (BLM) Twin Falls District, Burley Field Office, is soliciting comments, concerns, or issues specific to five geothermal drilling permit (GDP) applications submitted to the Burley Field Office by Walker Ranch Energy, LLC. These applications were received by the Burley Field Office on June 23, 2014 and include a surface use plan of operations for the drilling of five geothermal wells and the construction of access roads and drill pads, as well as drilling plans; the BLM is soliciting your comments regarding these applications.

The five proposed well pads are roughly 330 feet by 330 feet each, and this project would require the construction of approximately 1,888 feet of new road and 2,525 feet of upgraded road. These permits were previously authorized and environmental effects were analyzed in Environmental Assessment (EA) ID-220-2009-EA-3709, but the permits have since expired. The Proposed Action is to issue the permits again.

The BLM is preparing a document of NEPA adequacy (DNA) to determine whether the EA that was previously written is still adequate, and to determine whether any new issues have arisen. Conditions of approval will be developed for the project where any valid resource concerns or issues are identified. The Scoping/Information package for this project can be found at the following website: https://www.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/lup/lup_register.do. Once at the site, conduct a search selecting the State of Idaho then the Burley Field Office with the Document Type, Fiscal Year and Program selected as "all."

Your comments are specifically requested on concerns or issues specific to the five GDP applications. Comments made on this proposal would be most helpful if they are received on or before November 30, 2014, and are directly relevant to the proposal and project area. Feedback will be accepted beyond this date, however, such comments may be considered secondary to comments received in a timely manner.

If you have difficulties obtaining this document from the internet, to request a hardcopy, or for questions and concerns, please contact Steve Lubinski, Geologist, Burley Field Office, at (208) 677-6600 or via email at Slubinski@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/Jim Tharp
Jim Tharp
Field Manager (Acting)

SCOPING/INFORMATION PACKAGE
Walker Ranch Energy, LLC Walker Ranch Energy
Geothermal Drilling Permits, Wells 23-13, 65-14, 27-14, 32-23, 72-22
Lease # IDI-37087 NEPA # DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2014-0030-DNA

The information in this package summarizes a Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Burley Field Office action in response to five Geothermal Drilling Permit (GDP) applications near Bridge, Idaho in the Raft River Valley. The five permits are in the exact same locations as five permits that were issued in 2010. The 2010 permits were issued for two years, with a possible extension of two years. The permits were extended, but expired in 2014. The environmental impacts from drilling the five wells were originally analyzed in an Environmental Assessment (EA) that was completed January 1, 2010.

The purpose of this scoping document is to inform you and other interested parties of the Proposed Action, to solicit comments regarding the project, and specifically, to identify any issues that have developed since the original EA was written. The BLM Burley Field Office is currently preparing a document of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) adequacy (DNA) to ensure the requirements of NEPA are met.

Proposed Action

The GDP's cover lands within the Raft River Valley, Cassia County, Idaho, and are located in Boise Meridian, T. 15 S., R. 26 E., SWSW Sections 13, 14, 22, and 23 on BLM geothermal lease IDI-37087. The surface and mineral estates are public land administered by the BLM, Burley Field Office.

The Proposed Action is to drill five wells in the Raft River Known Geothermal Area. The proposed well pads are roughly 330 feet by 330 feet. This project would require the construction of 1,888 feet of new road, 2,525 feet of upgraded road, and a total of roughly three acres of disturbance. The permits would also allow for flow testing of the wells. These permits were previously authorized and environmental effects were analyzed in Environmental Assessment ID-220-2009-EA-3709, but have since expired. The Proposed Action is to issue the permits again.

Purpose of and Need for Proposed Action

The purpose of the project is to permit geothermal drilling on BLM Federal geothermal leases held by Agua Caliente LLC within the BLM Burley Field Office. The drilling activities, which would include flow-testing wells that are drilled, would characterize the geothermal resources within the leased area to determine whether future development of geothermal resources would be feasible, and would determine whether drainage of the geothermal resource may be occurring.

The Secretary of the Interior has the authority and responsibility to lease the Federal mineral estate for geothermal development. The Secretary of the Interior has delegated this responsibility to the BLM. Under the terms of the Geothermal Steam Act and its implementing regulations (as amended and supplemented by the National Energy Policy Act of 2005, the BLM must respond to the plans and programs submitted by the lessee (or unit operator) and either approve, require modification of, or deny these applications (BLM's project need).

The main needs for the project proponent are:

- 1) Under the terms and conditions of the lease, the lessee is required to perform diligent development activities (drilling, for example) if they are to maintain the lease beyond its primary term of 10 years (43 CFR 3207.11).
- 2) The lessee has a contractual obligation to protect the Federal government from potential drainage that may occur from off-lease operations.

Conditions of Approval Identified Through the Previous Environmental Assessment

The previous EA analyzed the Proposed Action and identified conditions of approval as mitigation measures for the protection of the environment, for public safety, and to comply with federal law. These conditions of approval would be applied to the five GDP's if BLM decides to issue them. Issues that these conditions of approval addressed include:

- Drilling Plan
- Pre-Construction
- Traffic Management
- Road and Pad Construction
- Climate and Air Quality
- Noise
- Noxious Weeds/Invasive Plants
- Soils/Vegetation
- Waste Management
- Wildlife

Public Input Needed

Your comments are specifically requested for the identifying of additional resource issues and development of stipulations for this project. Comments would be most helpful if they are received by November 30, 2014, and are directly relevant to the project area. The BLM will accept public feedback outside of established public involvement time frames; however, such comments may be considered secondary to comments received in a timely manner.

Written comments must be submitted to the BLM, Burley Field Office, 15 East 200 South, Burley, ID 83318. The office business hours for submitting hand-delivered comments are 7:45 am through 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc), or portable document format (.pdf) to blm_id_burleyoffice@blm.gov. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed, in other formats than those listed, or containing viruses will be rejected. To be most helpful, comments sent electronically should include the title of this project in the subject line. Please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The primary contact for questions and comments for this project is Steve Lubinski, Geologist, Burley Field Office, (208) 677-6667, or email at Slubinski@blm.gov.

Enclosures

Map 1 - Project Location Map (1 p)

Map 2 - Project Topographic Map (From EA ID-220-2009-EA-3709) (1 p)

Project Location Map - Walker Ranch LLC Proposed Geothermal Drilling Permits



